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EGYPT

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Regional Affairs

Egyptians Seek Direct Entry Into Lebanon

9AF0613A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 27 Feb 92 p 1

[Article by Hamdi Rizq]

[Text] Cairo—Young, brawny Egyptians are hoping to find a safe haven for their boats that are lying idle. Having failed in the Arab Gulf, they returned to Cairo empty-handed following Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and its subsequent destructive withdrawal from there. They again failed in Tripoli, Libya, which has had enough of Egyptians and therefore began closing the gates that had been wide open for them. But these young men joke about this situation, saying that entering Beirut must be through Damascus gate.

This joking turns into a mockery when the ships sail from Alexandria with only a handful of passengers on board, who were lucky to obtain a Lebanese entry visa. Apparently entry visas are on their way to becoming available in the fake visa market. Meanwhile, boats sailing from Alexandria to Latakia in Syria are crowded with passengers. The irony here is that all of them head for Lebanon and not for Damascus.

Needless to say, an Egyptian needs no visa to enter Syria, but the Lebanese restrict this entry for security reasons. Lebanese investors and Arab contractors are vying for cheap Egyptian labor, and are providing collective visas for the laborers who are needed to take part in the large-scale reconstruction plan, which will cost $20 billion, according to a recent statement to AL-HAYAH in Cairo by Lebanese Economic Minister Marwan Hamadah.

The Egyptians, particularly officials, are displeased with entry [into Lebanon] in this manner. They urge the Lebanese authorities concerned to facilitate the entry of Egyptian companies and their work teams into Lebanon in order to take part in the reconstruction plan, and to issue such visas without delay, if the desire is to have Egyptian participation in the reconstruction plan, the first part of which will take four years to complete and will cost $4 billion.

The Lebanese Embassy in Cairo is taking no action on the complaints by Egyptians, some of whom turn to the Egyptian-Lebanese Friendship Association in order to solve the problem of visas that have been delayed for months. Badran Kamil, chairman of the association, was compelled to talk directly to President Ilyas Hrawi in order to solve the problem of issuing visas to the Egyptians, particularly since the Lebanese in Egypt enjoy [these] privileges. These 8,000 Lebanese manage businesses with costs of $300 million, which brings in returns pleasing to the Lebanese and prompts them to seek more.

The Egyptians do not wish a repetition of their experience in Iraq, Kuwait, and Libya, but they are hoping to find a suitable Lebanese alternative that would be beneficial to both sides. Minister Hamadah stressed Lebanon's need for Egyptian workers, whose toil has developed the Gulf, and will develop Beirut. Presently, the Lebanese law treats all Egyptian, Lebanese, and even Arab companies equally, and the entry of Egyptians into Lebanon is facilitated, something which the Egyptians welcome and demand more of.

Al-Sayyid Kamil, a proponent of this problem, says he hopes that the day will come when the Egyptians will enter Lebanon through Beirut's airports and ports, and do not have to enter via Damascus, just as they entered Iraq via Jordan. Entering from the back door puts the entering persons in jeopardy, the least of which is deportation for lack of visa.

Interest in CIS Muslim Republics Discussed

92AF0747B Cairo AKHBAR AL-YAWM in Arabic 23, 30 Apr 92

[Article by Dr. Siba'i Muhammad Siba'i, Director of Cairo University's Center for Oriental Studies]

[23 Apr p 6]

[Text] The collapse of the Soviet Union is considered one of the features of what is called the new world order. Just as the rise of the Soviet state in 1917 gave rise to an international strategy, undoubtledly its fragmentation has important dimensions and effects, and will continue to appear on the international scene.

Although we are not discussing the many causes of that recent event, we can examine the effect of nationalism among those causes. The feelings and aspirations of independence in the republics that make up the new Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] were one of the chief factors in dismantling what was known as the Soviet empire.

In our view:

1. The field of activity and the battlefield among the various nations after these developments will be in the economic field from now on; the military aspect is no longer the decisive one. It has become local and regional, only.

2. The world order is now going through comprehensive changes, from [being] a bipolar world in which the peace was kept by achieving military and political balance, to an order moving slowly but determinedly towards dependence on economic blocs, in axes: the United States, unified Europe, Japan (the final structure is not fixed yet).

3. If it is necessary, as Alon (Pinqas) says (in DAVAR [Israeli Newspaper], 20 December 1991), to have an official agreement on America's control of the world, then the collapse is a practical certificate that settles that subject for a long time to come.

4. The rivalry between the two superpowers in the Third World has ended, and a sort of instability will take its place in the developing countries and also in the Islamic world, which is still rich in resources, backward enough to endanger political development, and the home of divergent points of view on issues.

There is a situation that causes worry: the presence of approximately 30,000 muclear weapons in regions of four Soviet republics; and thousands of nuclear scientists without work and generals without armies.

Islam entered those countries at the start of the Ummayad era. Mu'awiyah appointed Bin-'Umru al-Ghaffari to govern these countries in 50 Hijrah/AD 669. He was the first to lead the Muslims of Transoxania in prayer, by which we mean the Amu Darya River that divides the republics of Uzbekistan from Turkmenistan in Central Asia.

The Islamic conquests that advanced into Transoxania are linked to the name of the Arab commander Qataybah Bin-Muslim, whose conquests stretched across the whole region that was annexed by the former Soviet Union, up to the borders of China.

The Muslims were the first to try and fill the divine religious gap in the land of Russia at the beginning of the tenth century AD, in the time of 'Abbasid Caliph al-Muqtadir bi-Allah (290-330 Hijrah/AD 908-932). Success was limited, as the Russians chose the Christian religion, turning away from Judaism and Islam. Circumcision and the ban on drinking alcohol were obstacles to their king, Vladimir, accepting Islam. With Judaism it was the same, because of the Jewish leaders' poor show of their religion, history, and language.

So he adopted Christianity of the Byzantine rite after his visit to Byzantium and the Aya Sofia Church. He was baptized officially in AD 988, and the day after his baptism he issued an edict outlawing idolatry, with Orthodox Christianity becoming the official religion. Everyone was baptized according to the rites of that church, and Christianity remained the official religion until the October Revolution in 1917.

The Russians fought Islam and the Muslims, and even tried to force the Muslims to become Christians. The Tsars considered the fight against Islam and Muslims within Russia to be a part of their struggle against their deadly enemies the Ottomans.

The former Soviet Union included nearly one hundred large and small peoples and communities, but the largest peoples, in order or size, were the Russians, Ukranians, Uzbeks, Belarussians, and the Tartars. The Russians are a European people, while the Turks, Tartars, and Mongols are Asian peoples.

Muslims are scattered through all the republics, though the density of their presence increases as we get closer to the borders of the Islamic countries, mainly in the southern regions located to the north of Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan, as well as the area adjacent to Chinese territory. The reason is the region of Turkestan, which used to be divided between Russia and China.

The Muslim republics of the CIS are: Kazakhistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Kirghizia (or Kirghizistan), and Turkmenia, or Turkmenistan.

While Azerbaijan is in the region of the Caucasus, the five other republics are located in Central Asia, almost cut off, surrounded on all four sides by mountains and elevations. The total area of the six republics is nearly 6 million square kilometers. If we leave the Chinese aside, we find that the two races dominating it are the Turks and Mongols. The Mongols have embraced Islam since the time of Baraka Khan in Russia (AD 1259-1267), who was Sunni, and after him Ahmad Takudar (AD 1282-1284) and Ghazan Khan (AD 1295-1304).

The area of the former Soviet Union was about 22.4 million square kilometers, equivalent to a sixth of the inhabited area. Islam grew in Russia since 1905, when the (Orthodox Christian) Tsarist government issued an edict permitting religious freedom. In 1909, the edict resulted in 91 families in a single village converting to Islam all at once (the village was called Utumsafa). As an example of the open spread of Islam, 53,000 persons became Muslims in that country between 1901 and 1910.

During the Gorbachev era, 350,000 Jews emigrated from the Soviet Union to Israel. There are now 200,000 Jews in the Muslim republics, of whom 190 have applied to emigrate to Israel, according to Simcha Dinitz during his presentation of the summary report for final working year of the Jewish Agency, published 14 January 1992 in YEDI'OT AHARANOT and MA'ARIV newspapers. The agency president also said that there are eleven agency envoys working in the Muslim republics, five in Tashkent (the Uzbek capital) and Samarkand.

He added that soon he will begin to set up a direct Tashkent-Israel route, and this route may be on the verge of operation by El Al between Israel; Tashkent; and Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan.

On 9 January 1992, Israeli newspapers indicated the need for an emergency route to evacuate Jews from CIS countries (during a university seminar entirely devoted to discussing the collapse of the Soviet empire). (Diznif Kas) of the Russian Studies Department in Hebrew University said that some countries of the CIS are anti-Israel, and his view was shared by Dr. Skulu [Shlomo?] Avneri, who said that the religious and nationalistic feeling in some republics will prompt Jews to emigrate to Israel. Experts from Russia, the United States, Britain, and Israel participated in the conference. What are we doing?

Some of the Jewish researchers pointed out that one may not look at the Jews of the Soviet Union as one entity, and it is expected that these Jews will incline more and more towards the local population, which is not desirable.

For about three years, Harvard University in the United States has held a seminar on the Soviet Union as Americans see it, and one of the basic, even pivotal, debate points was the fear of lack of control over nationalistic and religious feeling in the six Muslim republics, where there are stores of arms and nuclear material.

Turkey and Iran are interested in the Muslim republics, and the Turkish-speaking Muslim republics have witnessed a struggle between secular Turkey and Islamic Iran.

Last November, Turkey recognized independent Azerbaijan, while Iran was calling for Azerbaijan's nomination for the Islamic conference held in Dakkar, the capital of Senegal.

The two countries have tried to change their alphabet; Iran wanted to change it to the Arabic alphabet with the additional four letters peculiar to Persian, while Turkey wanted to change the alphabet to Latin letters.

[30 Apr p 6]

[Text] Dr. Siba'i continues his discussion of the Muslim republics of Central Asia, and the courses of action open to Egypt to support cooperation with these republics, in this second and final installment.

In view of the importance of economics, in 1989 an organization for economic cooperation was set up among the countries of the Black Sea: Turkey, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, and Romania. We note that, after the dissolution, Turkey monitors the behavior of the republics of Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, with the Turkish-speaking autonomous regions.

Among the non-Turkish-speaking republics is Armenia, which made its concern clear to Turkey when [Turkey] expressed its wish to mediate between Azerbaijan and Armenia regarding the region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

After that, Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati visited Moscow, met his Armenian counterpart, and made a similar offer.

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan called for the establishment of land and air links between Turkey and Armenia, and the reopening of a Turkish-Armenian border center. Tehran proposed overland facilities and a railroad, to be built by Iran, to end the isolation of the ancient autonomous republic of Nakhichefan, located between Armenia, Turkey, and Iran.

The Iranian foreign minister visited the Muslim republics, and Turkey received the president of Kazakhstan, the prime minister of Azerbaijan, and the Turkoman president, who asked Turkey to recognize Turkmenia.

Turkey signed agreements with Kazakhstan and Turkmenia mandating political, economic, scientific, industrial, and cultural cooperation. Turkey arranged a satellite link to secure communications between Ankara and the capitals of the Muslim republics, after previously ensuring contact with Baku. Moscow preferred Ankara to Tehran before the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The Shi'ite sect in all of the Muslim republics has close ties to the clergymen of Iran.

Several institutes for oriental studies were founded in the major cities of the Soviet Union: Arabic, Islamic, Persian, Turkish, and European studies, and history were taught. They graduated a generation of distinguished orientalists, which compels us to send those able to confront this thinking with their pens; and those who can add more.

The Arabic language has entered some secondary schools in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Azerbaijan. Prominent orientalists taught Arabic and Islamic culture in the universities of Kiev and Baku in Azerbaijan. Russian orientalists published many of their works and books in all of the republics. They also published many magazines specializing in oriental studies, and Islamic and Arabic studies in particular, since 1886, such as the methods magazine "Z.V.O.," and magazines called "PALESTINIAN FORA," "ISLAMIC WORLD" magazine, "THE NEW ORIENT," "THE ORIENT," and "IRAN," (published in 1927) and many others.

It was not strange for us to notice that most of the articles gave the materialist interpretation of history, or the subjection of religious thought in line with the conditions being experienced by the society of the former Soviet Union.

The six Muslim republics have the lowest populations and economic, military, and political capabilities. They need great financial aid and bigger investments from the Arab, Islamic, and wealthy countries. These republics, despite their current presence in the CIS, will not accomplish what the citizens of the other republics can.

If the Arabs, in their alliance with the former Soviet Union, saw their strategic interests in it, the continuance of the alliance with these republics is no less important—that they should be driven by the motive of faith.

Our—Egypt's—path, is to take an interest in the religious and cultural aspect, and to choose individuals capable of acquainting the cultural and intellectual heritage of these republics with Islamic cultural, and Turkish and Persian in particular. This requires a special sort of specially qualified person.

Specifically, we may propose the following:

1. Utilizing the prestige that Egypt's name enjoys in the Islamic world, and in the eyes of the Turks and Turkish peoples in particular, and strong initial emphasis on religious aspects. Enlightened clerics, who truly understand Islam, must preside to send it forth to people embracing it in the six republics, in a way appropriate to the nature of the times. Thus, they would be a model to these peoples in word and deed. These clerics must preside with total awareness of the standing that the Shi'ite sect occupies in some of the republics, such as Azerbaijan. We would not send anyone who considers the Shi'ite to be heretics, for example, to say nothing of their regard for the relative importance of Turkey's relations with these republics.

2. That this religious direction be combined with these six republics' interest in learning Arabic, taking into consideration the useful lessons from Egypt's long experience in teaching Arabic to the Africans. However, a review of the method of selecting the candidates for this delicate task should be conducted. It is conceivable that the best thing would be to send qualified university professors who know Arabic and oriental languages to take charge of training the republics' national cadres, one group after the other, enabling these cadres to take part in the Arabic teaching process, alongside the Egyptians selected to teach at the pre-university levels.

3. Fulfilling the Egyptian image at this stage with an able and effective cultural presence able to move consciously and with discretion in the spirit of these republics' races, culture, thought, aspirations, and various problems, and with their awareness of the concerns and aims of the other foreign powers—particularly Israel, Turkey, and Iran—their ability to influence, and their regional precedence before Egypt.

4. The importance of arranging the process of receiving the citizens of these republics in Egypt's universities and institutes by granting priority to each republic, together with action to eliminate the problems faced by students from these regions, such as the Turks, in their studies at al-Azhar's institutes and universities—[such as] their lack of acquaintance with the Egyptian dialect, in which some lectures are given.

Internal Affairs

Aims, Conflicts of Political Islam Analyzed

92AF0746A Cairo AL-AHRAM in Arabic 2 May 92 p 15

[Article by Dr. Mustafa Mahmud: "Political Islam"]

[Text] Politicians in the West are truthful, in a way, when they state that they are not against Islam as a religion. They have no objection at all if we pray, fast, and go on the hajj; spend our days and nights worshipping, praying, supplicating, and singing the praises of God; and spend the rest of our lives cloistered in mosques to profess the unity of God and glorify Him to our hearts' content. They have no enmity towards ritualistic Islam—the Islam of rites, worship, and asceticism. They have no objection if we inherit all of the hereafter. That is of no concern to them and they don't think about it. They might even have encouraged mysticism, and supported and defended Sufi clerics. Rather, their animosity and hostility are directed at the other Islam—Islam that challenges them for the authority to lead the world and build it on different values and ideals; Islam that battles them for the world and demands a foothold in the movement of life; Islam that wishes to chart an alternative cultural route, lay different values for behavior, and create different artistic

and intellectual models; Islam that wishes to promote science, invention, and technology for reasons other than supremacy, invasion, aggression, and domination; political Islam—Islam that goes beyond individual reform to societal reform, cultural reform, and cosmic change.

There is no bargaining here and no margin for forgiveness. This is vicious war and you are a target for all.

The Western way of life has now turned into an armed fortress that fights off all manner of competition and alternatives. It is a fortress with charm and appeal, even to Muslims themselves. American and European liberalism, which condones degeneracy, free sexual relations, perversion, common disrobing, gambling parlors, and sex movies, can not abide a regime that would limit such liberties, even if it were on the other side of the Atlantic, and especially if it represented a competing culture with a legacy and past history.

Conflict is the fate of all who would try to take Islam outside the circle of mosques or beyond Sufi cloisters.

Sometimes conflict begins at the front door, even with members of the Muslim house with Western leanings. The problem with our times is that stunning scientific advances in the West have conquered all and carry [patterns of] Western life and degeneracy as part and parcel of its appealing package. Many of us would open our eyes to find that we have become accustomed to the easy life, replete with the bad and degenerate, in the belief that it is necessary and mandated for all scientific and technological advances. That is the view of our secular brethren.

Political Islam is, therefore, being fought on two fronts. It is simultaneously challenged by both foreigners and its own people. Political Islam will not gain a voice or an upper hand until the other camp collapses as a result of its own internal decay. Only then will all of us wake up and discover that this great technology was no more than a house of cards, and that Western civilization neither had soul nor carried within it the elements of its own continuity.

Russia was a recent example. The big bear lost consciousness while carrying enough atomic bombs to demolish the world several times over.

It is now the turn of the American "Papa Noel" who holds court over palaces of gems, tinsel, and Patriot missiles. Decay has begun eating at him and it won't be long before he collapses.

But those who will inherit the two collapsed systems won't be today's Muslims, who are plagued by weakness and are fractured into feuding sects and factions.

The heirs will be other Muslims, custom-made by God as a crown for history. It may be that we won't see them to feast our eyes on them. but perhaps our sons and grandsons will. Our concern is to help pave their lengthy road.

There will be those who will question why we need political Islam, in view of the exorbitant price we would have to pay for it.

Is it not enough that we pray, fast, go on hajj, worship God our way, mind our own business, and that others leave us alone?

The obvious answer is that we are not being left alone. Western decay is reaching us through the back door of newspapers, books, and magazines. It is brainwashing our sons via television, the movies, and videos. It entices our daughters with fashions, fads, and explicit songs.

Even worse is planned by the enemies around us. They want to share our land, our drink of water, and our bite of food. Ousted Jews fleeing the lands of hunger want to eat at our table.

Corruption and thought control are the vanguards of territorial occupation and imposed authority. Those are all links—one leads to the other.

Degeneracy weakens the will, deadens the heart, and breeds weakness. Then the follow-up blow would meet no resistance and find no immunity in the body of society, and we would wake up one day to find that we have lost our faith, our world, ourselves, and everything else. The second floor will collapse if we ignore the crack on the first floor.

To seek security by merely locking ourselves in and taking to our prayer rugs may save one's skin, but one's daughters and sons will pay the price of one's negligence, because they will have to suffer the battle and face future schemes with their chests.

God meant Islam to be a banner on earth and not merely to guide individuals within themselves. He said: "It is He who has sent His Apostle with guidance and the religion of truth, to proclaim it over all religion." [Koran 9:33]

Therefore, every Muslim has two obligations: to remedy himself and to correct the social climate around him in order to help others see the light.

But Muslims commit only to the first obligation and will keep to themselves behind closed doors when the world comes to an end, when everything will collapse, atheism will prevail, injustice and corruption will abound and it would be too late to do anything about it.

But I don't think that we have reached the end of the world yet. Rather, we are on the verge of an Islamic renaissance that will prosper and prevail, in spite of all obstacles and difficulties. The confrontation can now be sensed on all fronts—political and military—in Burma, Afghanistan, Nagorno-Karabakh, Bosnia, Albania, and in the portentous conflict between Israel and the Arab states.

God's destiny is inevitable. Our country's safety valve during the momentous events to come is for the church in Egypt to be as it was during the Crusades—a Christian Egyptian in heart and soul, and a bulwark of the land on which it lives and the Nile from which it drinks. Sedition will initially infiltrate through that crack.

But sedition was unable to do so in the days of Salah-al-din when, the Egyptian Church took a stand against the European Church, because it understood the reality of the battle and that it was simply imperialism and conquest that had nothing to do with the teachings of Christ. The Crusades failed and Jerusalem returned, free and proud, to both Muslims and Christians.

History is about to repeat itself today, but this time Israel will be the spearhead supported by American evangelism, which Zionism managed to infiltrate. The clouds are gathering ominously on the horizon, but God has his ways.

We should not confuse political Islam with terrorism. All of Islam is rooted in freedom, and rejects coercion of any kind. The manifestations we see—hostage kidnapping, exploding vehicles, blasting aircraft, and firing on police stations—are

neither of Islam nor of fundamentalism. They are crimes perpetrated by murderous criminals.

Islam is options and conviction. Its means is friendly persuasion. It resorts to arms only in response to aggression, and it fights only in defense of usurped rights. It is a religion of mercy, amity, tolerance, moderation, forgiveness, and love. And all of that means peace.

Political Islam means neither coups d'etat nor conspiracy and revolution. Very simply, it means that Muslim public opinion should be strong enough to be compelling to the ruler and to guide all his decisions.

Political Islam means a contemporaneous approach, awareness, and democratic channels.

The Soldier's Story

Television commercials do not just introduce products and publicize trademarks. They have gone beyond that to promote goods of another kind, utilizing sex to attract customers with base means.

I don't understand whether such commercials push chicken soup, ceramics, and soap, or whether they market bosoms, waists, and buttocks.

I don't understand why we emulate American advertising only in decadence, depravity, and perversion.

There is no doubt that Egyptian models are cuter and more provocative than American women, and that they consequently represent more of a risk to the viewer who has become less interested in the material products than in another commodity he considers more attractive and important—winks and swaying hips.

Commercials have crossed the boundary and gone beyond the advertising framework to base movements, gestures, double entendre, and even profanity.

I can see a beggar utilizing his amputated arm or leg, but for a beautiful girl to beg by exposing other things in order to hook customers into buying some insecticide—that's too much, unless such gestures are supposed to be another kind of insecticides. Morality-cide for instance!

The Egyptian street—crowded and replete with unemployment, drugs, and repressed and stifled youth—can not endure such a tune and would be driven to more insanity.

Sexual desire during our burning-hot summers doesn't need further stimulation from television. It is already active and insistent and manifests itself in daily incidents of molestation and rape.

I demand advertising guidelines and an end to that type of base commercial, in consideration of adolescent viewers and of this tired generation that sits on the rim of a volcano.

Do not pour fuel on the fire, then complain about extremism, perversion, and violence. [Sexual] provocation is always the first link in the chain and the harbinger of the deluge.

Al-Hilmiyah Nights

Those who have followed the [TV] series "Al-Hilmiyah Nights" for the past few years no doubt realize that its plot deals with class struggle. Workers, students, and laborers on one side, and pashas and the rich bourgeoisie on the other. The struggle between the two sides develops along clearly Marxist lines using Marxist slogans. Workers are the progressive vanguard and weavers of the future and the dawn to come. Conversations between them turn into ideological speeches and cheers. The July 23 revolution is the Nasirite dawn and revolutionary puritanism. Al-Sadat is a symbol of relapse, corruption, and imperialism. Our brother 'Ukashah last year devoted more than 30 episodes chasing corruption everywhere to finally place responsibility for it on al-Sadat alone, in a desperate attempt at deprecating all that he has done. But this theme has lightened up in recent episodes. There is no doubt that the earthquake that brought down socialism world-wide and the collapse and disgrace of Marxist ideology have shaken our colleague 'Ukashah, and struck him down with some case of split personality and schizophrenia. He has now toned down the hostile tone of his scenes and dialogues, but class hatred is consuming him anew and he returns to sharp class delineation. Through his characters, we see that Egypt has become a confrontation between the al-Samahiyah and al-Badriyah families. The former are workers, toilers, and laborers. The latter are the pashas, princes, and the bourgeoisie. He tells us through his characters that al-Samahiyahs are the heroes, the honorable, the martyrs, and the vanguard. Al-Badriyahs, by contrast, are the crooks, traitors, and agents.

The series depicts Islam as beards, terrorism, drugs, and investment companies competing to swindle people of their money. At best, these are hallucinations uttered by 'Ablah Kamil in the hysterical role she has played since the inception of the series. The screenplay depicts Islam as some kind of opium for the faithful and a cover for criminals and terrorists. This is a concept that conforms to the Marxist [orientation] of brother 'Ukashah.

But the reactionary politics, speeches, and slogans that fill the series do not bring brother 'Ukashah the desired results of being convincing to the audience. On the contrary, the reverse is true. We find that the is audience sympathetic to the pashas, likes the pashas, and falls in love with Salah al-Sa'dani (Sulayman Pasha al-Ghanim), with al-Fakhrani (Salim Pasha al-Badri), and with princess Samiyah al-Alfi. No one paid attention to the worker convulsions, avant gard speeches, or ideological prattle that permeate the series. The slogans fell on deaf ears.

This is undoubtedly a good lesson for brother 'Ukashah. He has desensitized the audience to everything political or leftist in the series and left it sympathetic to everything artistic and innovative.

Brother 'Ukashah is no doubt an artist skilled in developing characters, but the leftist, the political, and the ideological within him will destroy him if he, in future works, gives in to this class fury and to the Marxist bug that is gnawing on him.

As a skilled artist, he has no need for that drivel. He can do without that ideological rage against al-Sadat. We don't want to open old wounds and ask him under whose regime were the Muhammad 'Ali family jewels pillaged and the royal palaces plundered, and to whom the spoils went. Did this not take place under the unsullied and pristine regime whose praises he sings? No one was able to open his mouth then, because tongues were cut, quills were broken, and the press was strangled by censorship. We do not want to belabor those incidents, of which he is well aware, but chooses to disregard out of calculated ideological blindness.

Brother 'Ukashah needs to redefine his understanding of Islam. Not the Islam of al-Rayyan [investment company], of

hallucination, or of terrorism, but the Islam that God sent down upon earth, and around which the world will revolve for the remainder of history.

Sarajevo

The Serbian army is overrunning the Bosnia-Hercegovina republic. It is bombing and shelling Sarajevo and killing peaceful, unarmed Muslims. All this is evoking nothing but mild reactions, meek protests, and a UN envoy who comes and goes. There has been no decisive action, no preemptive ultimatum, and no American intervention to stop the bloodshed.

This time, UN resolutions are not part of Article 7, as they were in the case of the plane that exploded over Lockerbie [Scotland], killing 280 passengers, even though the victims this time are thousands of Bosnian Muslims and, before them, hundreds of thousands of Arakan Muslims in Burma.

The world did not react, except on paper. The protests are in the media, the resolutions verbal, and the visits staged. But murder continues and injustice has a free hand.

No urgency is perceived as long as American interests are not threatened and conflicts are handled with negotiations and conciliatory cables.

Prior to that, Israel bombed an Egyptian plane over Sinai, killing all aboard, but the world did not stir, as it did in the Lockerbie incident. It seems that the blood of all victims is not equal under the law.

It seems that the guardians of justice sometimes turn the other way when the slain are of particular peoples and when there is no threat to oil or to their interests.

Party Changes Democratize Political Climate

NDP Adopts Elections

92AF0753A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 26 Apr 92 p 1

[Text] Cairo—Within several days, the ruling National Democratic Party [NDP] in Egypt will complete an extensive transformation that includes the restructuring of its leadership structures through elections. This process, which began in late 1991, encompasses about 6,000 base [grassroots] units, as well as committees in the various governorates. It is a first for the party since it was founded about 14 years ago.

The ruling party is holding its sixth general conference this July. Sixty percent of its middle-level leaders have been changed, in the hope that the party will become a model for the responsible exercise of democracy and a structure that truly represents the public, instead of being meaningless structures.

The task of the party's general conference is to approve the choices by Party Chairman Husni Mubarak for senior leadership positions in the political bureau and the general secretariat.

The restructuring of the party through "elections" (rather than "selections," which until now had been the method for effecting changes) is an attempt to avoid additional negative effects on the party's popularity with the public. Such effects were sharply reflected in the last elections for the People's Assembly (the Egyptian parliament) in November 1990. Those elections saw party leaders and figures deviating from their commitment to support candidates who had been selected to run. As a result, the NDP lost 30 percent of the seats in the People's Assembly in the end.

The NDP will shortly face a true test of its new formations' effectiveness among citizens. This will occur in the partial renewal elections for the Consultative Council, to be held on 7 June 1992. It is clear that the NDP will encounter stiff competition from opposition parties. These parties have declared their members' right to advance to these elections, which will be held by means of the individual district system. The opposition parties boycotted Consultative Council elections six years ago to protest the system of conducting them.

The NDP's restructuring is taking place concurrently with an important change in Egyptian society, namely the emergence of the Democratic Nasirist Party, whose right to engage in party activity officially, after ten years of being prohibited from doing so, was established by the judiciary recently. This new development will be reflected in the performance and effectiveness of the ruling NDP and its deputies.

The NDP must reformulate its political rhetoric directed toward citizens, especially in the general election. The strong emergence of the Nasirists and their organization into an official party will require the NDP to adjust its rhetoric about being rooted in, and an extension of, the 23 July Revolution.

The NDP is exploring the possibility of renewing its invitation to the Nasirist Party to engage in a dialogue with it. The NDP's Chairman, President Husni Mubarak, called for such a dialogue about eight months ago. However, the Nasirists' dispersal in more than one party at the time prevented them from accepting the invitation. The ruling party also hopes that the restructuring of its leadership will end the image with which it has been linked since it was established in 1978 as "the party of government," in contrast to the supposition that the government is the "government of the party."

Nasirists for Cooperation

92AF0753A Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 29 Apr 92 p 7

[Interview with Diya'-al-Din Dawud, provisional secretary of the Democratic Nasirist Party, by Hazim Munir; place and date not given]

[Text] The decision issued by the Supreme Administrative Court last week to nullify the decision of the Parties Affairs Commission to block [the establishment of] the Nasirist Party adds a new party to Egypt's political map, namely the Democratic Nasirist Party [DNP]. In the following interview, Diya'-al-Din Dawud, the party's provisional secretary, discusses the questions raised by the party's emergence into political life.

Diya'-al-Din Dawud, born in 1926, is a lawyer from Damietta. He held the position of secretary of the Socialist Union in Damietta during 1964-1968. He was elected a member of the National Assembly for two consecutive terms, from 1964 to 1971. In mid-1968, he served as social affairs minister and minister of state for National Assembly affairs. He was elected a member of the Socialist Union from 1969 until 1971. He was among the accused in the 15 May case and was sentenced to prison. He is currently a deputy in the People's Assembly for the district of Fariskur.

Competition or Cooperation?

[Munir] It is said that competition will flare up between the National Progressive Unionist Grouping Party [NPUGP] and the Nasirist Party. Is that accurate? What is the future of joint action between the two parties?

[Dawud] The Nasirists have a deep-rooted historical relationship with the NPUGP. The NPUGP opened its door and its heart to the Nasirists, and the Nasirists were a part of its fabric. Its headquarters served as a place for the meetings, conventions, and seminars of a party under formation.

The NPUGP placed all of its capabilities at our disposal. Hence, the DNP has in view a strong, effective NPUGP. The area of convergence and cooperation between the two parties is very broad, and we hope that areas of joint action and joint positions will grow.

[Munir] This leads us to ask whether the existence of a Nasirist party conflicts with the presence of other Nasirists in other opposition parties?

[Dawud] There is no conflict between the existence of a party for Nasirists and the presence of Nasirists in other parties. The Nasirists are, of course, dispersed throughout the different parties after having long been denied an independent party. We accept this reality. We do not see it conflicting with the establishment of a party which opens its membership to any Nasirist.

[Munir] What is the effect of Nasirist-Nasirist disagreements on the fledgling party?

[Dawud] There are no disagreements among the Nasirists. However, there is an ongoing dialogue. It is a sound, vital relationship which represents democracy, natural dialogue, the need to arrive at solutions to different problems based on Nasirist thought and axioms, and the search for new methods of practice and application. All Nasirists are under the umbrella of the party, without dispute.

[Munir] What about dialogue and cooperation with the Islamic political current? What are its features?

[Dawud] The Islamic current is an important political group. Its existence cannot be denied. Our policy is not to create an early rivalry with any political party or group, including the Islamic current. We believe that there are external threats and dangers facing all Arabs and Muslims. To confront these threats and dangers, all rational and mental efforts must be united, and all other conflicts must recede. The search for common ground and a good area of convergence with the Islamic current, and other political currents and forces is, therefore, in the offing and necessary. We are pursuing it.

[Munir] What are the areas of agreement and disagreement between the DNP and the NDP?

[Dawud] The NDP is similar to all of the other political parties and forces. We have no objection to holding a dialogue with it. We see the possibility of finding areas of cooperation, especially regarding national positions and confrontation of the growing, malicious, external dangers and threats.

[Munir] The world has seen fundamental changes in the recent past. They have generated new circumstances and domestic effects that differ completely from those that prevailed in the sixties. Are 'Abd-al-Nasir's theses for changing the domestic situation still appropriate?

[Dawud] Yes, what has been termed "the Nasirist program" in Egypt and the Arab world is still applicable and able to cope and deal with changes and new developments. It is incorrect to say that socialism has lost and capitalism has won. Social justice will remain a goal of all governments, regardless of differences between them. Perhaps the best indication is what happened in the British elections. John Major of the Conservative Party inclined toward greater social justice. He called for a classless society, and thus distanced himself from Thatcher's capitalism. The voters paid attention to him and he succeeded. By contrast, the British Labor Party moved toward the right, away from its original program, which was more inclined toward the achievement of social justice. It was defeated, despite having a good chance of winning.

Capitalism in the world suffers from internal contradictions and economic and political maladies that pose many dangers. Even in America itself, the country's debts and unemployment are growing, and the president is touring the world to seek out markets or areas of [economic] activity.

The call for the Nasirist program to achieve social justice and Arab unity is, therefore, still valid. The Nasirist ideology is the only method which has been tested and applied, and which has achieved much. No alternative to it has been proposed to date.

July Revolution is the Program

[Munir] What new ideas is Nasirism now proposing? What issues will the party make priorities in the coming days?

[Dawud] The party's ideas and objectives are manifest in its program. Its statement consolidates them. They are also stated in the documents of the 23 July Nasirist Revolution.

We have deferred discussing details until after the founders' meeting, the determination of party formations, and the start of internal activity.

[Munir] Can you at least appraise the government's economic policy?

[Dawud] In my personal opinion, the current economic policy will not achieve positive results. The government is giving priority to lowering inflation, thinking that doing so is the prelude to solving economic problems.

I believe that lowering inflation is merely a sedative which postpones coping with the real problem, whose root is unemployment. Unemployment is our most serious problem, and it is worsening daily in the absence of fundamental solutions. Unemployment and declining production in all areas are the most dangerous results of this policy, along with the risks entailed by selling the public sector and transferring ownership of it to foreign powers and to unseen powers linked with foreign powers and hidden behind them. Whoever holds the wealth obviously holds the power.

Democracy and Nasirism

[Munir] Some say that democracy and Nasirism are incompatible, and that the sixties were characterized by dictatorship and torture. How do you respond?

[Dawud] The sixties had its circumstances, accompanying phenomena, organizations, and appropriate methods of operation and engagement. It was a period of construction, redistribution of wealth, the beginning of a social revolution, and the achievement of social justice. It had its positive and negative aspects, like all major events. Any

judgement of it should take into account all of its circumstances and accompanying phenomena. It should not be judged or prosecuted based on a view that is removed from reality and the circumstances of reality, or based on today's logic and environment.

Time reveals many matters that were not as clear when they first occurred. A journey filled with action, movement, and change cannot be assessed in several lines of an answer to a question. It can be assessed through analysis and evaluation, and through reliable, in-depth, and fair judgment in an appropriate space. We are now in the present. We affirm, on the party's behalf, that the party is democratic, stressing belief in pluralistic democracy.

National Awakening

[Munir] How does the party view the Arab and international arena, in light of recent international and regional changes?

[Dawud] The party believes that we are in our worst phase of external Arab conditions. The Western world and America have bared their teeth and are determined to settle their historical accounts with the Arabs and Muslims. Following the Soviet Union's collapse, they have found the time and climate suited to international contentiousness, led by America.

The Arab world is in its worst state. It is dominated by schisms, regional division, and distrust, and it is inundated by problems related to indebtedness, borders, development, unemployment, and income disparity.

Therefore, we believe that political forces and nationalist parties should focus their efforts on awakening popular Arab awareness to restore correct Arab concepts, arouse lofty ambitions, explain the facts, and pressure and confront ruling regimes.

In my estimation, a confrontation is inevitable. No Arab state or political regime can confront this bitter, violent reality on its own. Rather, it is necessary to mobilize all Arab energies and capabilities, return to self-reliance, and activate the Arab, Islamic, and African spheres.

A Losing Bet

[Munir] How does that relate to the Middle East peace talks?

[Dawud] In my personal opinion, the peace negotiations will not achieve any results, after the Arabs have frittered away their cards. I believe that any wager on America changing its position and pressuring Israel is a losing bet based on erroneous calculations. There will not be any [U.S.] pressure [on Israel]. Rather, the roles have been distributed with a view toward maintaining pressure on the Arabs to grant more concessions or to reach the last station of concessions, which is to waive the rest of the Arabs' rights.

The timing, circumstances, and environment of negotiations must be chosen [carefully]. We chose the worst moment in the Arab nation's history. It is inconceivable to hold negotiations between two parties when one party possesses all of the means of pressure and the other possesses nothing. Victory is achieved by the stronger party. That is the law of negotiations.

It is wrong to imagine any Arab regime—and all of them are one-man regimes whose policies change when the ruler changes—being able, regardless of its loyalty, to obtain America's confidence and to rely on it from a position that is equal or close to Israel's standing vis-a-vis America, as a primary, guaranteed, stable tool, which has strategic agreements with it to implement its policies and desires.

Arrests Leave Extremist Groups in Disarray

92AF0749B London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 28 April 92 pp 1,4

[Article by 'Abdallah Kamal: "Extremist Groups in Egypt Search for Leader To End 'Cluster' Stage"]

[Text] Cairo—The movement of the extremist religious groups in Egypt is suffering from confusion and paralysis after the security authorities arrested a number of its most important leaders in various areas during the past few months. A leading member of the Jihad Organization acknowledged to AL-HAYAH that that constitutes "a new blow" to the organization, and has increased its need for diverse leadership.

AL-HAYAH has obtained the names of the arrested leaders who, inside the organization, are considered prime movers. They are: 'Ali al-Dinari—the leader in al-Minya Governorate; and his assistant, Sha'ban Mustafa. The former graduated from Dar al-'Ulum College in 1982, and the later from the School of Medicine two years later. In addition, there is Ahmad 'Abduh Salim—the leader in Asyut Governorate—and Dr. Mahmud Shu'ayb, spokesman for the Islamic Group in the same governorate. At the same time, Shu'ayb is related by marriage to Dr. 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, the mufti of the organization, who married Dr. Shu'ayb's sister and is currently living in the United States.

Moreover, these groups also suffer from a shortage of intellectual leadership, to enable them to manage covert activities in one form or another. Some of the basic cadres left prison recently, following the completion of their sentences for involvement in al-Sadat's assassination. They have renounced covert work, devoting themselves exclusively to overt activities. This prevents them from supervising covert operations. They include Usamah Hamid, dean of the Geological Department in the Faculty of Arts, Binha University; and Kamal al-Sa'id Habib, who graduated from the Faculty of Economics, but failed to get a position there as dean on the faculty, because of his criminal record. Raf'at Sayyid Ahmad, a writer close to these groups, told AL-HAYAH that, when the central structure of the organization was struck in 1981, after al-Mahjub's assassination and the Asyut incidents, the security forces weakened it. He said that it now could be called "'clusters,' since the word alludes to a group of youths forming a group in a preparatory or secondary school. In Imbabah, none of them have an organized framework, but rather, they rally behind the general concept of jihad. As for weakening the organization, I think that it exhausts the security forces, chasing it from one palace to another."

While everyone is talking about the general weakening that afflicts the extremist religious groups in Egypt, reports circulate about the possible return to Egypt of 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, who is said to be the organization's leader, to take up his position once more. However, more than one analysis confirms that 'Umar 'Abd-al-'Rahman, who played an undistinguished role in the assassination of President al-Sadat, is not the organization's actual leader. There are real differences about him inside many groups, beginning with those who accuse him of running away from the confrontation, to those who describe him as a model dove in whom they can believe, rather than a model hawk.

Counselor Sa'id al-'Ashmawi, a writer who follows the affairs of Islamic political groups, told AL-HAYAH that "those groups will remain as they are in Egypt, weakened with no leadership, because the players are from many areas both within and outside of Egypt, starting with Hasan al-Turabi, the leader of the National Islamic Front in Sudan, and even Iran and certain other Arab nations. This creates groups that are closer to disagreement than to agreement. This definitely confirms that they do not work for the good of Islam and religion, but rather, they work on behalf of a specific political purpose. My evidence for that is what is now going on in Afghanistan."

However, a new study written by Dr. Sayyid Dassuqi, one of the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood and a professor in the Faculty of Engineering, offers various justifications. He says that in Egypt today, "all currents, beginning with the Batiniyah [Islamic mystical movement] have been superior to the Batiniyah of the first centuries; to movements that gather around bits of our heritage and concentrate on them; and to secularism in all its forms, without exception.

"This split in the community's identity kills integrity of conduct, does away with aspirations, and destroys life, until the colonialists have troops on our soil. They seek to foment civil strife between the government and the governed. Therefore, we must expect that they will sneak among us here and there."

With regard to this vast amount of currents, in which religious extremist groups make waves in Egypt, one cannot give an exact estimate of the number of these religious clusters searching for a leader. However, we can note specific groups that have the greatest influence. They include: the Islamic Groups, al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah [To Accuse of Unbelief and Withdraw], al-Tawaqquf wa al-Tabayyun [Pause and Scrutinize] the Salafis, al-Tablig wa al-Da'wah [Announcement and Call], and Muhammad's Army (Egyptian branch of the well-known Jordanian group), etc.

While Counselor al-'Ashmawi describes these groups as being extremist vanguards, whose extremism negotiates with the extremism of Islamic political groups to control gains of some sort, he noted that certain data indicates that many disputes have occurred in elections of Egyptian doctors' unions, since all seats were won by Muslim Brotherhood candidates.

Therefore, can the Muslim Brotherhood be considered the leadership of the extremist religious groups or the opposite, i.e., a party to the conflict with them? In this regard, Sayf-al-Islam Hasan al-Banna, a member of the [Muslim Brotherhood] Office of Spiritual Guidance, told AL-HAYAH: "We are totally against violence. Our history confirms that we are the initiators of the Islamic awakening. There was no one but us, for years before the July Revolution. With regard to brother members of the Islamic groups, we are trying to save them from excess and their variant means of Islamic action."

In this same context, one could note that the establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood was an attempt to attract elements from these groups into the brotherhood. The evidence for that is that the majority of the leaders of extremist religious groups come from university students, who had converted to the Muslim Brotherhood. They became their basic cadre, and headed the list of their candidates in People's Assembly or union elections.

In the midst of the cluster years from 1981 to the present, and despite the lack of real leadership for the extremist religious groups during these years, Halah Mustafa noted in her study "Political Islam in Egypt—From the Reform Movement to Groups of Violence," that these groups carried out 92 acts of violence since 1981, beginning with the assassination of al-Sadat and ending with the assassination of [People's Assembly speaker] al-Mahjub. These acts also included the burning of video clubs, attacks on churches, fomenting sectarian strife, and prison escapes.

Police Crack Down on Extremist Groups

92AF0749C London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 4 May 92 p 4

[Article: Egyptian Interior Ministry Monitors 30 Extremist Groups; Police Warn Jihad Organization Against Confrontations"]

[Text] The acts of violence that Egypt is currently experiencing are raising questions about the future of the Jihad Organization and if it will continue to hold confrontations with security personnel. Elements of the organization say that they will not stop what they are doing, so long as the police try to eliminate their activities.

The killing of one of the extremists, Muhammad al-Shimi, by police bullets, was not the last of the attempts. According to statistics, six have been killed since the start of 1992, as opposed to four policemen shot by extremists' bullets. In this context, a security official stated: "The confrontations will continue so long as there is an armed Jihad Organization whose members are equipped with the most modern weapons. So long as they continue to violate the law and the Islamic shari'ah [religious law], by imposing their authority on several of the governorates, the police will not stand idly by."

The increased acts of violence on the part of extremist groups in Egypt have taken on new dimensions that warn of danger on the political and security levels. The scope of operations against individuals from the police forces is widening. Security authorities are studying measures that could be taken to guarantee stability and counter attempts to damage national unity by these elements, who have adopted religion as a cover for their terrorist activities, aimed at fomenting unrest among the people and creating fronts hostile to the existing security system.

No sooner did the incidents explode in al-Fayyum, Imbabah, and Isna from confrontations planned by extremist elements in order to attack policemen, than the leadership of the Egyptian Ministry of Interior saw the need to restore matters to their correct order, before further crimes of political assassination were committed. They began with emergency measures to avoid any future breakdowns or worsening of the current conflict between the police and the extremists. This was an attempt to avenge the assassination of the Fayyum officer and the police sergeant in Qina, the attempt to storm the house of an officer in Damietta, and the assassination of the survey engineer and his assistant in al-Fayyum, on the pretext that they were working as secret informers for security.

Among the new plans proposed by the Egyptian Interior Ministry is one to organize campaigns against villages and towns in which extremism is flourishing. In addition, certain mosques will be annexed by the Ministry of Awqaf [religious endowments] for its direct supervision. Preachers will be appointed for them who are capable of admonishing,

guiding, and countering the destructive ideas, especially with regard to educated people among them. To a considerable extent, the preachers will be from the sciences of Islamic jurisprudence [fiqh] and Koranic exegesis [tafsir], in order to curb the defiance of extremists, especially in al-Fayyum, Asyut, al-Minya, Sawhaj, and Qina.

The new plans were developed during operations to control the places in which these incidents took place, which are always hot spots. This is no secret to the police, who first tried to talk with the extremists. However, the extremists had prepared themselves for bloody confrontations, guided by religious rulings that consider jihad the only way to establish an Islamic state. They were determined to rely on force and violence, calling the rulers 'infidels' and rejecting existing laws, since they are the laws of infidels. Those who are arrested from extremist religious groups always cite this, as did Mamduh 'Ali Yusuf and Safwat 'Abd-al-Ghani, the arrestees in the case of al-Mahjub's assassination. No session of their trial—with the rest of the accused—passes without repetition of slogans that clearly demand a wave of assassinations against state officials.

Sources from a large security agency point out that it possesses documents that reveal startling facts about extremist organizations scattered about Egypt. They number more than 30 organizations and groups hostile to the regime, which attract many youths. Groups of professional assassins, fugitives from judicial sentences, and the unemployed are recruited by financial enticements. Some of these groups have been involved in attacks against the property of non-Muslims, which threatens sectarian violence.

The Egyptian Interior Ministry is trying to strip these groups of their cover, behind which they hide in order to conceal their true faces, and is trying to charge them with crimes of murder, plunder, theft, and the placing of explosive charges that are being committed. These people must be handed over to the courts and some of them executed, if these crimes are proven, in accordance with laws governing murder and sabotage.

Problems Remain for Private Investors

92AF0856B Cairo AL-AHRAM WEEKLY in English 7-13 May 92 p 4

[Article by Mohieddin Fathi: "Problems Remain for Private Investors"]

[Text] A study carried out by Dr. Hazem Goumaa of Zagazig University faculty of International Studies and Dr. Soheir Hasan of Al-Azhar University faculty of Economics and Commerce highlight some of the problems which still affect potential investors in Egypt.

In the first study of its kind, questionnaires were sent to 150 companies from the service, industrial, tourist and agricultural sectors, including companies in the new cities or on reclaimed land.

According to Dr. Goumaa, most developing countries, including Egypt, attempt to attract investments because of their need for capital. This requires legislation to create a good investment climate. The relevant legislation in Egypt is Investment Law 43 of 1974, amended by Law 59 of 1979, and Law 230 of 1989.

These laws increasingly gave certain exemptions and securities to attract new investments. Bureaucratic procedures were also simplified, and certain facilities were offered during the completion of the project. Nonetheless, many impediments remain in the way of investors.

The aim of the questionnaire, said Dr. Soheir Hasan, is to ascertain investors' views on the investment climate in Egypt, in order to assess what encouraged them to invest in spite of the many problems in the implementation of a project and the marketing of the final product. The questionnaire, she said, also tries to survey investors' respect for laws and regulations in Egypt.

"We paid careful attention in choosing the sample group to include all investment sectors in Egypt, and with regard to the number of approved projects in each sector," said Dr. Hasan. Of the 150 projects surveyed, 63 were industrial, 30 service, 27 financial, 18 contracting and building, and 12 agriculture and animal husbandry.

The results of the survey show that the level of investment has dropped in spite of the many facilities and exemptions given to investors. Although many of the projects are in new cities, their administration is always in Cairo, or other big cities.

Feasibility studies are often ineffective since they do not take local factors into consideration. Investors thus face unforeseen complications. The main reason for this is that feasibility studies meet only the requirements of the General Authority for Investments (GAFI).

Another complaint by respondents is the long time that lapses.

New Rules Reduce Red Tape for Investors

92AF0856C Cairo AL-AHRAM WEEKLY in English 7-13 May 92 p 4

[Article: "New Facilities To Ease Red Tape"]

[Text] The General Authority for Investment (GAFI) has released information regarding new facilities extended to investors, to abolish some of the complications and red tape facing investors.

Mohieddin El-Gharib, head of GAFI, outlined the most important changes:

—New investors will be exempted from applying for preliminary approval for projects not on the negative list, and investment projects will be exempted from presenting economic (financial) feasibility studies.

—The required number of application forms has been reduced from 18 to only four, to contain general information on the proposal; its location, capital, number of shareholders, costs, source of finance, labour and wages.

—GAFI will give additional help by assisting in locating a project site, and in obtaining the necessary permit from the various concerned authorities.

—Projects under execution are not exempted from obtaining permission from GAFI to import necessary inputs. GAFI will automatically stamp the bills to be presented to the custom's authorities, when demanded by the investor. Projects are also exempted from obtaining special approval to be presented to banks when applying for credit. A project permit obtained from the management council will suffice.

—GAFI has approved the repatriation of profits abroad, within 72 hours of auditors' presentation of the papers required in the executive guidelines of the investment law.

—Permission has been given to export the final product without having to refer back to GAFI. When the authority's permission is needed, this can be obtained from the concerned section of GAFI.

Dr. El-Gharib said that GAFI had passed these new facilities following a comprehensive review of all the procedures and applications required of investors, and in light of developments in the general economic liberalisation of all sectors.

Stagnation Leads to Installment Purchases

92AF0784F London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 6 May 92 p 10

[Article by Salwa Salah-al-Din]

[Text] Cairo—Egyptians recall that the system of buying and selling in installments remained the most common system in the '60s, especially for appliances and automobiles. This system, however, gradually disappeared, vanishing completely after the Egyptian government's authorizing the Open Door [economic] policy. Despite the expansion of the Egyptian market, the variety of goods, and intense competition, the Open Door years and the social and economic phenomena that resulted in a great increase in the rate of financial liquidity for a large number of consumers, it did not take into account limited-income people, who had difficulty obtaining appliances.

The system of selling in installments has reappeared in the Egyptian market. As one owner of an electrical appliance store in Cairo said, "Before they applied the economic Open Door policy, when the government used the planned economy system, consumers depended on buying appliances on time. Most consumers lacked sufficient liquidity, and merchants and store owners approved this system, reckoning it would get them a lot of sales in a limited-liquidity market. The economic open door was not a reason for the absence of selling in installments, but the economic conditions that came with it, especially the flight of many

Egyptians to work in the Gulf states, and the resulting flow of large sums of money into the Egyptian market, which were spent on appliances. Thus merchants and store and showroom owners did not need to deal with this system, which brings with it a lot of difficulty and risk."

It is striking the Egyptian newspapers have recently been running many advertisements telling consumers that one showroom is offering the largest amount of payment facilities, and another store authorizing an excellent interest-free installment system. Sayyid al-Shahat, who owns an appliance store in the al-Muhandisin neighborhood, says, "For years after the introduction of the Open Door policy, merchants and storeowners didn't need to deal with the installment system. However, the general conditions of the Egyptian economy and their reflection on the ability of consumers, has had a negative effect on buying and selling movement in the market, and the recession from which storeowners have suffered has pushed them back to reauthorizing the installment system."

Sayyid al-Shahat adds, "Problems began to appear with the collapse of money management firms several years ago. These companies offered a lot of financial liquidity for Egyptian families, at monthly rates. And it is no secret that many of these families that put their money on deposit with these money management firms used the monthly interest paid out to them to buy electric and electronic goods, and basic commodities. And after the collapse of the money management firms came the Gulf War, piling new burdens on the Egyptian market. While merchants sighed with relief at the end of the war, the Egyptian government imposed a sales tax in June of last year. The tax had a significant effect on the movement of buying and selling in light of the tough conditions merchants were already suffering from. Thus the return to the installment system was absolutely necessary to benefit merchants and consumers at the same time; merchants began to suffer from a severe slump and recession, and in light of new conditions, consumers were unable to secure their essential appliance needs, as far as they were concerned."

At a time when private sector store owners are rushing to pursue this system, large public sector stores are going the same way and have begun to authorize selling in installments in a large part of their activity, though the complex measures required for this system may push consumers to preferring to deal with private sector companies.

While private companies are content with obtaining drafts or post-dated checks from the customer, equal to the value of monthly payments that must be settled, with government companies it is different. They are not content with that [process], requiring a transaction with government or public sector employees after obtaining a document from their workplace giving salary details, and authorizing that the employer will undertake to pay the installments should the customer be unable to pay.

Effectiveness of Public-Sector Law Questioned

92AF0856D Cairo AL-AHRAM WEEKLY in English 7-13 May 92 p 4

[Article: "Seeking Answers About the Public Sector Law"]

[Text] A recent conference organised by the Business Club discussed the issue of public sector law between theory and practice.

Speaking at the conference, Dr. Atef Agwa, First Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Economy, highlighted some of the problems regarding the application of the law. He pointed out that the public sector law (203 of 1991) and its executive guidelines clearly concern the reform of public companies, financial structures and privatisation, however nothing has been done up to now.

The law, he said, has outlined the many ways by which the financial position of these companies may be reformed. This included the sale of factories and subsidiary companies under two criteria: the inability of the holding company to run them effectively; and the inability of the units themselves to produce economic quantities.

The law and its executive guidelines have endorsed the merger or division of holding companies according to a decree passed by the Prime Minister. Dr. Agwa raised the question why the Prime Minister has not taken a decision yet to merge some small companies whose small size is known to be the cause of their loss-making. On the other hand, he said, why has the Prime Minister not decided on splitting up some big loss making companies?

Such a decision, said Dr. Agwa, was necessary to assert the seriousness in abiding by the spirit of the law; instead of wasting time in establishing holding companies, managerial councils who would not have the right to make decisions regarding the restructuring of holding companies, financial structures.

Dr. Agwa also emphasised that mergers or division decisions are an ideal approach to public sector reform, instead of the current policy of transferring debts these companies through the sale of shares, because that does not eliminate the problem of making losses.

Dr. Agwa blamed some officials for making equivocal statements regarding the true aim of the law, even though its goal is to privatise or allow individual ownership. In view of the government's inability to pump more money into loss-making companies, he said, the government had no choice but to sell shares to individuals and to reform the financial structure of these companies. Dr. Agwa conceded that part of the problem may lie in the way the law has been drawn up, pointing out that article 25 prohibits the sale of more than 51 per cent of the shares, unless it is through the general assembly of the holding company.

In addition, Dr. Agwa remarked that there was a delay in applying some of the prerequisites of the law, particularly concerning a scheme for valuing the companies, even though article 15 of the law is supposed to clarify that point. He also pointed that the general understanding of holding companies should include the control of the sale of subsidiary companies, and not their administration.

Dr. Agwa also pointed out that there has been procrastination in terms of applying the law, such as the supervision by accountants from other than the Central Auditing Agency. This, he said, has not been effected, resulting in a delay in the approval of the budgets of some companies to this day. He also noted that some companies have not established any laws yet governing wages and holding leave, even though article 42 stipulates that this should be done six months after the passing of the law.

Hassan Khalil, head of the Business Club executive committee and head of a section within the capital market, observed that the number of people appointed in holding companies is too high, often resulting in the

reappointment of former public sector managers, in addition to the appointment of a large number of technocrats (e.g. professors).

Defending the government's stand, Mohamed Hassouna, advisor to the Minister of Economy, said that the delay in application was not due to prevarication on the part of the government, but was due to the need to ensure government control, so that things do not get out of hand. He cited the example of the money investment companies.

Hassouna pointed out that such reforms and a change in strategy require a thorough study. The law is in itself a mechanism for control of change. As such, he said, the previous period should not be viewed as delay on part of the government, but rather as an attempt to study all the problems that could possibly arise throughout the different stages of applying the law.

Population, Environmental Concerns Reviewed

Pollution Bill in Works

92AF0675A Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic 14 Apr pp 1,4

[Text] During its current session, the People's Assembly will debate a comprehensive bill that has been reviewed by the State Council. Dr. 'Atif 'Ubayd, Minister of Cabinet Affairs and Administrative Development, affirmed that, for the first time in Egypt, the bill will provide legal protection for man, animals, and plants, and sets a maximum noise level in cities. Additionally, it protects natural wealth and combats air, marine, and river pollution.

The bill obliges industrial establishments to take all precautions to prevent air pollutants from penetrating the work environment, except within the permissible limit. They should also ensure industrial safety and health for workers in establishments, provide air purification, and ban smoking in transportation, cinemas, and enclosed places.

The bill also provides that no license shall be issued for any establishment except after ensuring that waster processing equipment is made available in such establishments. The bill gives an 18-month grace period for existing establishments to provide this equipment. The administrative authorities will carry out periodical analysis of air samples in these establishments to ensure that they are not polluted. In case of violation, the establishment owner will be given a warning. In case of a repetition, the license will be withdrawn for a period of six months.

AL-AHRAM correspondent 'Ala' al-'Attar has learned that the bill regulates ship and carrier traffic in Egyptian ports, and calls for setting up a system for reporting pollution incidents. The bill also protects marine environment against pollution with oil, harmful substances, and sewage. The bill stipulates heavy penalties for violators, including seven years' imprisonment and a fine of up to $250,000 or the equivalent in Egyptian pounds, which every ship causing pollution will have to pay. The penalty will be increased to imprisonment at hard labor for life or for a fixed period of time for those who violate the law and causes human death. Any ship causing water pollution will be confiscated. The correspondent has also learned that the People's Assembly's committees on health and environment submitted the bill to the ministries of health, petroleum, tourism, agriculture, transportation, interior, defense, and other parties concerned, as well as the Businessmen's Association, in order to formulate a comprehensive national concept for the bill that would ensure its implementation without having an adverse effect on production activities in Egypt.

With regard to protecting the air against pollution, the bill bans burning of refuse, except in locations designated for this purpose. The bill stipulates that when an establishment is set up, a location must be chosen that would ensure that air pollutants will not exceed the limit permissible by law. The bill also bans the use of pesticides for agricultural purposes and public health in a manner that would expose man, animals, plants, water drainage, and all other environmental components to any danger. The bill obliges individuals and bodies, when carrying out excavation, construction, and demolition works, to take the necessary measures to prevent materials from spilling over into surrounding areas. When any kind fuel is burned for industrial purposes or for power generation, care must be taken to ensure that the gasses and fumes emitted are within the permissible limit.

The bill obliges those working in producing, filling, and storing liquid, gaseous, and solid materials to take the necessary measures to ensure that no harm is caused to man, animals, and plants as a result of their leakage, and to ensure that no pollutants are emitted in excess of the permissible limit. When operating equipment, warning devices, and loudspeakers, everybody should observe the [noise] limit permissible by law, ensuring that the sound does not go beyond the location's perimeter.

The bill bans all ships and carriers, regardless of their nationality, from dumping oil in Egyptian territorial waters. It also bans national and foreign companies and bodies licensed to explore or exploit offshore oil fields from disposing of any polluted materials resulting from their operations. Any resulting refuse must be treated according to the latest technical system. Contracts for exploration for oil and natural resources should stipulate that these parties must abide by the environmental rules and laws.

Solar Power Discussed

92AF0675B Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic 12 Apr 92 p 4

[Article by Fawzi 'Abd-al-Halim: "Will Egypt's Sun Resolve Energy Crisis, Pollution Problem?"]

[Text] Cairo is witnessing an important event with the holding of the Third International Conference on Solar and Renewable Energy Applications, organized by the international and Egyptian associations for solar energy. The four-day conference will start Sunday [19 Apr]. It will be attended by a large number of energy experts, including Adolf (?Gotenzburg), director of (?Franhoefer) Solar Energy Academy, Germany's largest specialized academy, and chairman of the International Association for Solar Energy.

Why was Cairo chosen as the conference venue?

Dr. Musallam Shaltut, general secretary of the conference and professor of solar energy physics, replies: "It is because Egypt is an example of Third World countries that will face an acute energy crisis because of population growth and the inability of existing energy sources to meet development needs. The conference will discuss more than 100 working papers, half of which came from Egyptian universities; 20 research papers from research centers and the military technical college; and 30 research papers from outside Egypt. The most important topics of discussion are solar energy applications, photovoltaic thermal systems, solar structure, wind power, and biopower, and their utilization as alternative, clean, and renewable energy sources for the development of new urban communities."

The conference, which is being held under the auspices of Minister of Scientific Research Dr. 'Adil 'Izz, will present a display by specialized local and foreign companies of the latest solar and wind applications systems, ways for their ideal exploitation, and the possibility of utilizing them to achieve national objectives in Egypt, such as developing the desert and the agricultural lands. Solar and renewable energy is considered to be an alternative, clean source of energy that is likely to enable implementation of construction and development plans in the near future.

When asked about the nature of the energy crisis he expects, and the role of solar energy in reducing pollution caused by the use of the traditional energy, Dr. Shaltut said: "According to the latest statistics, energy consumption per capita has increased from 50 kilowatt-hours [kwh] to 640 kwh per year. This upsurge is due to industrialization and tremendous development in Egypt. We can envision the nature of the expected energy crisis if we realize that our electrical power consumption, which in 1986 was estimated at about 32 billion kwh per year, will reach 100 billion kwh per year, only eight years from today, in the year 2000. This means that we must provide 70 billion kwh annually until the beginning of the new century. This is something that the new hydroelectric power stations in Isna, Naj' Hammadi, or Asyut, which produce no more than 200 megawatts—a very small amount—will not be able to meet. In ideal circumstances, the natural gas available for the electric power sector will generate 10 billion to 12 billion kwh. The Munkhafaz al-Qattarah project, which will cost $3 billion, will produce no more than 2 billion kwh a year, assuming that it will be implemented.

"Therefore, we must tend toward utilizing the alternative energies available in our country, and the sun is the most abundant and cleanest of all energies.

"Egypt's state plan to meet our needs for renewable energy is no more than 5 percent of the total energy required in the year 2005. At present, it represents only .5 percent of the energy consumed. It is now used in Egypt for solar water heaters in homes, in hotels, and in tourist villages. In the industrial sector, it is used in the automated slaughter house in Madinah al-Nasr, in Hulwan yarn and textile factory for textile washing, and on the desert roads to generate electricity that feeds telephones and railroad signals. Solar cells have also been used for water pumping in some trial fields, such as Wadi al-Natrun, and for lighting up buoys in maritime channels."

The greatest difficulty facing the expansion of solar energy is its present high cost, the difficulty of storing it, and its need for large areas.

Finally, the effect of expanding solar energy use will be to wipe out a great deal of the pollution around us because of gas emissions and factory waste.

Drop in Birthrate Noted

92AF0675C Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic 13 Apr 92 p 5

[Article by Nahal Shukri]

[Text] Prime Minster 'Atif Sidqi said that President Husni Mubarak's concern with the population problem was a landmark on the road to dealing with the problem, from all its aspects. This has enabled Egypt to achieve great success in the continuous reduction in the birthrate and death rate, as well as a drop in the rate of natural population growth from 3.04 in 1985 to 2.47 [percent] in 1990, and an increase in the use of family planning methods to 60 percent in the cities in 1992.

In a speech read on his behalf by Minister of Health Raghib Duwaydar at the opening of the Conference of Population Policy Experts held in Cairo, preparatory to convening the World Conference on Population Policies in 1994, the prime minister said that Egypt's new population policies' outlines include realizing a better geographical distribution of inhabitants through laying down a new population map, integrating women into the development process, and cooperating with the United Nations.

At the conference, attended by Social Affairs Minister Dr. Amal 'Uthman, the governors of Cairo, al-Gharbiyah, and al-Sharqiyah, and 40 UN experts, Dr. Mahir Mahran, rapporteur of the National Population Council, said that, as a result of the great achievement realized in the population field under the auspices of President Mubarak, Egypt presented at the United Nations a request for the International Conference on Population to be held in Egypt in the summer of 1994.

Dr. Nafis Sadiq, chairwoman of UN Fund for Population Activities, praised the Egyptian leadership's success in dealing with the population problem, since Egypt is regarded as a successful model among the developing countries in resolving the population problem.

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